

Capacity Building for an NDIS

August 2013 NDIS Update

Welcome to the August edition of the NDIS Readiness Bulletin. This is published as part of the NDIS Sector Readiness Project which is managed by National Disability Services (NDS) with funding support from the Victorian Government.

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We are now eight weeks into the launch of DisabilityCare (the NDIS) and great progress is being made around the country as the scheme becomes real for people with a disability, their families, carers and the organisations that support them. Over 490 organisations across the four launch sites are now Registered Providers of Supports with DisabilityCare Australia (DCA). In Barwon there are currently 177 Victorian based providers and 10 interstate providers registered under DCA, including 42 Plan Management Providers (23.7%). The full list of providers for each launch site can be found on the [DCA website](#) which is updated regularly.

NDS acknowledges that everyone has been working hard to make the transition to the new operating environment. It is important to remember, that this is a three year launch. Some things will go right, some things wrong. This is to be expected with any big structural reform. We are very keen that when an issue is identified, we work together to address it as soon as possible. It is important that we learn from the experience and ensure that DisabilityCare works in the long term.

A number of issues have recently arisen in Barwon, including the involvement of providers in the participant planning process, and we are pleased to have been able to have worked with DisabilityCare to improve awareness amongst all parties and work towards their resolution. Two workshops were held with DisabilityCare with information outlining the role of providers in supporting participants in planning. DCA has acknowledged that there are some exceptions where a provider may be invited into the planning meeting and examples of these are outlined in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

NDS has been investigating the issue of a [Model Agreement](#). You may have seen the DCA Model Agreement which was loaded onto www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au a few weeks ago. NDS has further enhanced this agreement Model Agreement and it can be adapted by service providers to meet the needs of both participants and providers. This Agreement builds upon the work undertaken in one of the Practical Design Fund projects, which considered options for [Consumer Service Agreements](#). This agreement has been shared with DCA. Ultimately, the decision on what is included in an agreement rests with both the participant and the provider.

FaHCSIA has also updated the information for providers about the Better Start and Helping Children with Autism programs. Relevant provider information has been extracted from this and included in the FAQs document. Members can read more detailed information through the [FaHCSIA website](#).

NDS will continue to provide the practical supports and information required to help service providers make this transition to the new world of the NDIS.

DisabilityCare Price Review

After NDS raised a number of issues relating to DCA's release of its initial [Support Clusters Definitions and Pricing](#), we are pleased that DCA has committed to review prices and focus primarily on the prices set for one-to-one disability support (such as 'assistance with self-care activities' and 'assistance to access community, social and recreational activities').

A brief paper ([PDF 101KB](#), [Word 82KB](#)) developed by NDS highlights the inadequacies of the one-to-one support prices. It also emphasises the additional costs of supporting participants with complex needs; and the need to fund complex coordination and/or case management for participants and their families who need intensive assistance to organise and coordinate their services.

The paper suggests that an incomplete understanding of existing price arrangements helps explain some of the low rates. It recommends that DCA immediately re-set the base rate for one-to-one support at no less than the South Australian rate of \$40.15 and that it review the adequacy of this price prior to the ERO increase in December 2013.

NDS is aware of DCA's imperative to set an *efficient* price and that at some yet-to-be-determined time in the future, service providers are likely to compete in a market in which prices are deregulated. We are thus keen to develop benchmarking that enables service organisations to compare cost structures and drive efficiency.

NDS welcomes comment on the recommendations outlined in the paper and reminds members that feedback on the prices set for other types of support would also be valuable and help inform ongoing price discussions with DCA.

Members are alerted to the greatly expanded '[Support Clusters Definitions and Pricing](#)' documents now available. These provide more information about support items and, in particular, include detailed lists of assistive technology and associated items.

Provider Registration for DisabilityCare

Providers wishing to register need to complete the online Smart Form located on the [DisabilityCare website](#). If providers have any issues with the registration process please contact DCA on 1800 800 110. Providers might also be interested in reviewing DCA's [operational guideline](#) to get a better understanding of some of the decision making processes that will support the scheme.

Governments agree on ERO Funding Supplementation

NDS welcomes the news that prolonged negotiations between the Federal and Victorian governments about Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) funding supplementation have concluded with an agreement between the two governments. We also welcome the Victorian Government's commitment that the outstanding ERO supplementation funding will flow to eligible services within two weeks of receipt from the Commonwealth. This is expected to occur in September.

NDS has been working with both governments to resolve this issue, concerned that the impasse put substantial stress on service providers. Whilst we recognise that increased wages for workers in the disability sector are vital to building workforce capacity, we will monitor impacts of the ERO to ensure that the extra costs associated with the increase are not borne by service providers or service users.

Barwon NDIS Readiness Project

NDS Victoria has been funded by the Victorian Government to work with service providers operating in the NDIS Barwon Launch area to support them practically to prepare for the transition to the NDIS. The project comprises Engagement and Communication activities (such as this Bulletin, and monthly Barwon based meetings), and a range of targeted workshops. NDS is also working in collaboration with VICSERV and Early Childhood Intervention Australia (Vic Chapter).

NDS has convened a number of workshops since the commencement of this project; if you have not attended these workshops but are interested in seeing a copy of the presentations you can access them via the [NDS website](#).

DCA Participants and Planning

This month NDS facilitated two workshops (13 & 23 August) that focused on the DisabilityCare Planning and Assessment Framework. Queries central to the discussion included; the role of service providers in planning, risk management during planning phase and commencement with a new service provider, timelines from planning to service delivery, what informal supports and reasonable and necessary, identification and response to service gaps, response to lack of available universal services and advocacy and appeals processes for participants. NDS summarised the key issues and themes [[PDF 385KB](#), [Word 45KB](#)].

DCA Pricing Clusters

NDS received strong interest in the two DCA Pricing Clusters sessions held on 3 & 4 of September. These sessions attracted around 100 members and other service providers to be informed about the DCA Pricing Clusters and provided with an opportunity to seek clarification.

Consolidate, Partner or Collaborate?

NDS attracted over 25 people to an event on 13 August with one of Victoria's leading law firms, Russell Kennedy Solicitors, where principal Paul Gleeson shared his insights on the notions of consolidation, partnerships and collaborations in our sector. The presentation is available on the [NDS website](#).

With the massive expansion of the disability services sector through the development of DCA, there will be opportunities for not-for-profit disability service providers to collaborate and partner on new service offerings, to not only better support people with a disability, but to ensure the future sustainability of organisations. Being prepared and being aware of opportunities for consolidation, partnership and collaboration will be important and something organisations will increasingly need to consider.

Children & Young People with disability: Joining up service provision

NDS hosted an event focused on Children & Young People with disability on 7 August, building on the December forum. It provided current information to disability service providers in the Barwon area about services for children and young people funded by DisabilityCare Australia, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Attendees identified potential gaps or issues with the interface between services and opportunities to enhance good practice and innovation in service delivery. NDS summarised the key issues and themes [[PDF 580KB](#), [Word 26KB](#)].

Mental Health and NDIS

NDS is hosting a joint forum with Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria (VICSERV) on 12 September to consider the range of issues arising in relation to services for people with mental health issues in the context of the NDIS. The target audience includes representatives from mental health services, disability services supporting people with mental health issues operating in the Barwon Region, relevant government staff and other interested stakeholders.

The forum aims to:

- It aims to identify areas of concern, areas requiring further investigation, and valuable aspects of the existing service system which could be incorporated into NDIS, and

- Contribute to recommendations to DCA, government, peak bodies and service providers to further inform relevant development work.

Future NDS workshops

NDS are planning a range of additional workshops to support service providers in the launch site. Details of these events will be included in the event section of this bulletin. Topics identified for activities until the end of 2013 include:

- Business disciplines & financial implications
- Workforce Development
- Board Governance & Engagement

NDS Innovative Accommodation Options Forum

NDS is hosting a forum on 21 October to explore and showcase some of the innovative thinking which is happening in relation to supported accommodation and how some of that, and new ideas, can be applied in a NDIS environment. We are calling for expressions of interest to provide short presentations about innovative examples of development or design relating to accommodation for people with disabilities; or in innovative, high quality provision of support to people. The forum will showcase a limited number of such options, and there will also be display of material about good practice. For further information please contact Sarah Fordyce, ph.03 8341 4303 or sarah.fordyce@nds.org.au.

St Laurence Community Services Inc Case Study

Shared services under the DisabilityCare system

St Laurence is a large provider of aged care and disability services, employment and training, retirement living, business services and public services in the Barwon area. We thought it would be useful to hear from St Laurence in regard to their approach to the management of shared services.

St Laurence Community Services Inc is a not-for-profit organisation providing services in rural and regional communities across southern and western Victoria. Since 1959, St Laurence has specialised in caring for people as they age, supporting them in their own home or in a residential care home. They also provide services to people who have a disability to be more fully included in the life of the community, including finding a job.

NDS sat down with Garry Ellis, Chief Financial Officer at St Laurence, and asked some questions to learn how about how they manage shared services and to delve into what lessons can be learned in the transition to the DisabilityCare Australia system.

1. What are shared services?

Shared services involve organisations working together to create efficiencies and reduce corporate costs such as finance, payroll, human resources, IT support, maintenance, grant writing, etc. Where organisations are big enough and have economies of scale, they are able to employ a range of specialist staff to run those

services. Smaller organisations that don't have the financial capacity to employ specialists in those areas, can purchase services from a larger organisation.

2. How did St Laurence get involved in shared services?

Approximately 10 years ago, St Laurence established a shared service whereby they manage the payroll system for a local Community Health Service. Within the last 12 months, St Laurence has been approached by two additional services to discuss the option of shared services.

3. How does the shared service model work?

St Laurence manages the entire payroll service system for a Community Health Service located in the same region. This involves St Laurence processing the employee timesheets and undertaking all payroll functions. Payments resulting from the process are made from the Community Health Service's bank account into the employee's account. St Laurence prepares fortnightly and monthly reports and employee payment summaries at end of financial year on behalf of the Community Health Service

4. What are the benefits of shared services?

The agency managing the shared service may use some excess capacity and gain some revenue. Other services involved may achieve a more effective and efficient system and have access to expertise, rather than employing their own staff.

5. Have there been any challenges managing shared services, and if so, how did St Laurence overcome them?

During the last five years I am not aware of any issues that have occurred with the management of our shared services. The success of the shared services model hinges on a good relationship between both organisations. St Laurence visits the Community Health Service regularly to maintain a positive relationship, good communication and ensure we are getting the systems and processes right.

St Laurence policies and procedures are an important element that ensures the shared services are successful. The Community Health Service adheres to our policies and protocols to make sure that they align with our systems and processes.

6. What can service providers learn from your experience in your involvement in shared services?

Shared services provide benefits to all parties involved. In a period of dynamic change, shared services can assist organisations through provision of services. This may be a preferred option for some organisations rather than investing in ICT and employing staff, particularly if they do not have the capacity to do so in the short to medium term.

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Shared services could be considered as an efficient and effective model for small to medium size organisations in a period of growth, particularly during the transition to DisabilityCare (the NDIS). In particular, it would enable these services to focus on their core business while accessing specialist staff and systems to run other aspects of their business.

Wisdom from the wider world

Human rights are the cornerstone of strong, healthy communities where everyone can participate and be included. They are basic entitlements that belong to every one of us, regardless of our background, where we live, what we look like, what we think or what we believe. Based on the values of freedom, equality, respect and dignity, human rights acknowledge the fundamental worth of each person. The law places responsibilities on government and other public authorities to consider people's rights when developing laws, policies and delivering services. Below are some practical resources that can assist providers, participants and their families/carers.

For service providers

- [From Principle to Practice: Implementing the Human Rights-based Approach in Community Organisations](#), Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission 2012
- [A United Step Forward – A guide to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), Office for Disability, Victoria, 2008
- [Enlivening human dignity: The Senior Practitioner implementing the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 Guidelines for disability service providers](#), Office of the Senior Practitioner, 2009
- [Supporting Decision Making: A Guide to supporting people with a disability to make their own decisions](#), Disability Services Division, Victorian Department of Human Services, 2012
- [Using the Charter in Policy and Practice: Ways in which community sector organisations are responding to the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities](#), Victorian Council of Social Service, 2008

For people with a disability

- [Helping You and Your Family: information, support and advocacy for parents of children with a disability](#), Association for Children with a Disability 2013
- [Everyone has human rights, understand yours: A guide to human rights for people with a disability](#), Queensland Advocacy Incorporated, Booklet, September 2006
- [Hey don't be getting 'my rights' all wrong: My money, my choices, my relationships, my privacy and more](#), Council on Quality and Leadership, Quiz booklet, 2008
- [We have Human Rights: A human rights handbook for people with disabilities](#), Harvard Project on Disability, 2008
- [Who wants to be a millionaire? Human Rights Games](#), SARU

- [Making a complaint about a Breach of Human Rights, NDS Victoria](#)

NDIS Facts & Figures - August 2013

In this edition we have included a sheet of Facts and Figures about the scheme and the operations of the LTAs.

This list will expand as more questions and issues are raised.

Download this month's Facts & Figures.

- [\[PDF 290KB\]](#)
- [\[Word 30KB\]](#)

Frequently Asked Questions August 2013

In this edition we have included a list of answers to some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the scheme and the operations of the LTAs.

This list will expand as more questions and issues are raised.

Download this month's Frequently Asked Questions.

- [\[PDF 945KB\]](#)

- [\[Word 100KB\]](#)

Making a Service Agreement

Click here to download the model agreement.[\[Word 35KB\]](#)

